Transition-Focused Education for Students with Disabilties in General Education

DIANE S. BASSETT, PH.D.
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO
DIANE.BASSETT@UNCO.EDU

The transition paradigm provides the foundation for all secondary education

- All educational content is relevant to students
- All educational content is tied to standards and to future goals – use So What questions
- All accommodations create a "transparent" environment for all learners
- All professionals work collaboratively beginning with the end in mind
- All students have a voice in their educational decision making

(Kochhar-Bryant and Bassett, 2002)

Transition Opportunities Must Exist in Every Setting, Especially in General Education

- Over 85% of students with exceptionalities will be served in general education settings.
- General education settings most often emphasize academics over functional or vocational content.
- The number of students with exceptionalities going to postsecondary settings has tripled in the last 15 years.
- Students must be able to access general education content in order to succeed in postsecondary settings.

How can students with disabilities successfully access transition-related opportunities in the general education classroom?
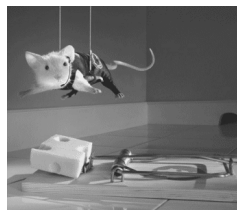

Transition-focused general education includes:
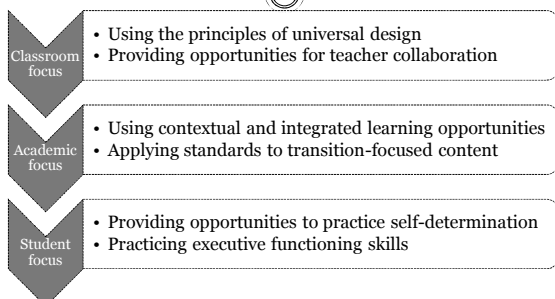
Classroom focus
- Using the principles of universal design
- Providing opportunities for teacher collaboration

Academic focus
- Using contextual and integrated learning opportunities
- Applying standards to transition-focused content

Student focus
- Providing opportunities to practice self-determination
- Practicing executive functioning skills

Classroom Focus

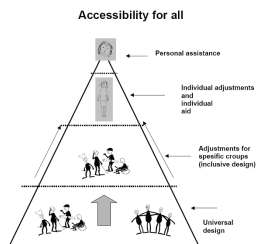**Using the principles of universal design**

Providing opportunities for teacher collaboration

Using the principles of UDL

- **Universal design –**
  The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without adaptation or specialized design.

Accessibility for all

Personal assistance

Individual adjustments and individual aid

Adjustments for spesific croups (inclusive design)

Universal design

CAST (2008) identifies 3 areas for determining accessibility:

- **Recognition:** How are students expected to identifiy, interpret, or recognize the information given?

- **Expression:** How are students expected to express or communicate their understanding?

- **Engagement**: What is the interest of the student or what is the motivation/value in learning the information?

Principles of UDL

1. To support recognition learning, *provide multiple, flexible methods of presentation*
2. To support strategic learning, *provide multiple, flexible methods of expression and apprenticeship*
3. To support affective learning, *provide multiple, flexible options for engagement*

Rose & Meyer, 2002

Principle One: Equitable Use
Principle Two Flexibility in Use

The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.

The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.

Principle Three: Simple and Intuitive Use
Principle Four: Perceptive Information

Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills

The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.

**Closed captioning of text as it is spoken.**

Principle Five: Tolerance for Error
Principle Six: Low Physical Error

The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.

The design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.

Principle Seven:
Size and Space for Approach and Use

Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.
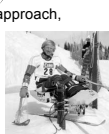
Which do you use?

- ◆ Faucets with levers rather than twist handles?
- ◆ Automatic doors or door levers rather than knobs?
- ◆ Elevators and ramps rather than stairs?
- ◆ Books on tape or CD rather than print?
- ◆ Others?
  Closed captioned TV in a bar or airport? Curb cuts when biking? A voice activated cell phone?

UDL and Transition

- UDL can support postsecondary goals by enhancing access to content
- UDL provides access to ALL learners through relevant instruction
- Transition is fundamental to UDL because it emphasizes positive outcomes
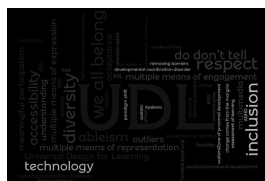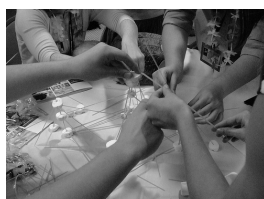

UDL: Content Represented in Numerous Ways

- Visual and auditory
- Hands-on activities
- Use of technology
- Multiple supports
- Links to other content and goals
- Multiple instructors
- Student preference

(Thoma, Bartholomew, & Scott, 2009)

## UDL: Students Engaged in Multiple Ways

- Independent work
- Cooperative learning
- Use of technology
- Station teaching
- Use of school resources and personnel
- Community-based instruction

(Thoma, Bartholomew, & Scott, 2009)

## UDL: Knowledge Expressed in Multiple Ways

- Formal and informal assessments
- Group projects
- Student choice from a menu of options
- Portfolios
- Use of technology
- Community-based
- Oral presentations
- Products

(Thoma, Bartholomew, & Scott, 2009)

3
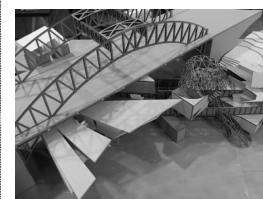
Remember!

"Universal design for learning does not remove academic challenges for students; it removes barriers to access. Simply stated, universal design is just good teaching."
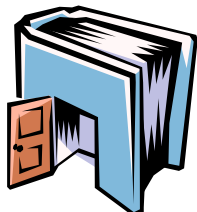
OSU partnership grant, cited in Burdette,2005, p.10.

Professional Collaboration is Essential to Transition and UDL

Collaborative practice positively impacts transition education in general education by:

- Introducing the general education teacher to the principles of transition and life beyond secondary school

- Allowing the general ed. teacher to supply content and the special educator to supply the relevance and appropriate pedagogy *("What's special about special education?")*

- Including students as team members in collaborative decision-making

- Engaging students and other community members in presenting content

Importance of Co-teaching

- Meets the individual needs of students
- Provides more individualized (and contextualized) content in gen. ed. setting
- Reduces stigma of pull-out programs
- Creates mutual collegial support
- Demonstrates to students the value of teamwork
- Adapted from Friend and Cook (2007), *Interactions*

Co-Teaching Approaches

- One Teaching – One Observing

- One Teaching – One Drifting

- Station Teaching

- Alternative Teaching

- Team Teaching

One Teaching – One Observing

- Requires little joint planning time
- Provides time for special ed. tchr. to learn about content and consider how to implement transition-focused elements
- Can be a good intro to new special ed. teachers
- BUT – watch out for being relegated to this role

One Teaching – One Drifting

- Requires little joint planning time
- Can enhance curriculum with infusion "bursts"
- Drifter can ask the "So What ?" questions
- Good for new teachers, BUT can be relegated to this role

Station Teaching

- Each teacher has responsibility to deliver instruction
- Each teacher can take a different aspect of the content
- Station teaching offers multiple ways to access content
- Some students may be distracted

Parallel Teaching

- Each teacher is competent to deliver the same content
- Lower student/teacher ratio
- Allows for creativity in how content will be presented
- Gen Ed. teachers are using transition-focused approaches, too

Alternative Teaching

- Can pull small groups for individualized and differentiated instruction
- Can be used as a tutorial session, re-teaching, or enrichment
- May be viewed as stigmatizing
- Special ed. teacher may be viewed as a teacher assistant only

Team Teaching

- Greatest amount of shared responsibility
- Greatest amount of trust and commitment
- Most difficult to implement (esp. planning time)
- Greatest potential for creativity
- Greatest potential to infuse transition-related materials

Co-Teaching Approaches: Which Ones are YOU doing?

- One Teaching – One Observing
- One Teaching – One Drifting
- Station Teaching
- Alternative Teaching
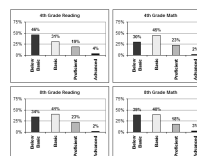- Team Teaching

Academic Focus

| Using contextual and integrated learning opportunities	Applying standards to transition-focused content

---

Academic standards can easily be tied to transition-focused content

---

Arizona Academic Standards

- **Standards by Area**
- The Arts - Revised (Approved 6.26.06)
- Foreign and Native Language (Title change 10/01) (Adopted 4.28.97)
- Language Arts
  - Reading Standard Articulated by Grade Level (Approved 3.31.03)
  - Writing Standard Articulated by Grade Level (Approved 6.28.04)
  - Language Arts Standards 3 and 4
- 2008 Mathematics Articulated by Grade Level (Approved 6.24.08)
- Science Standard Articulated by Grade Level (Approved 5.24.04, Updated 3.10.05)
- Social Studies Standard Articulated by Grade Level (Approved 9.26.05, Updated 5.22.06)
- 2009 Educational Technology Standard Articulated by Grade Level (Approved 5.18.09)
- Workplace Skills (Adopted 3.24.97)
- 2009 Physical Education Standard (Approved 10.26.09)
- 2009 Health Education Standard (Approved 10.26.09)

Use contextual and integrated learning opportunities
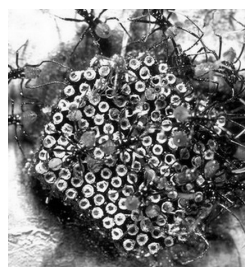
Address real-life topics

Or

Make curricular content

more

meaningful and relevant

Three Levels of Competence

1. **Knowledge** (facts, concepts)
2. **Skills** (performance)
3. **Intelligent application** of knowledge & skills (practical and social intelligence)


What's the correct term?

- **functional skills**
- **contextual learning**
- **functional academics**
- **applied academics**
- **integrated education**
- **activities of daily living (ADLs)**
- **life skills – real life skills**

Real Life Skills

Specific <u>competencies</u>
(i.e., knowledge, skills, application of)
of <u>local</u> and <u>cultural</u> relevance
needed to perform <u>everyday</u> activities
in a variety of <u>settings</u>

<u>typically</u> encountered by most individuals.

Domains of Adulthood
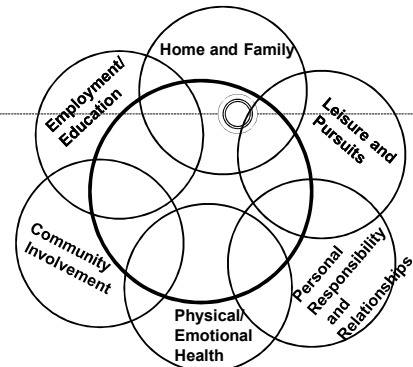
Cronin, M. E. & Patton, J. R. (1993). Life skills instruction for all students with special needs: A practical guide for integrating real-life content into the curriculum. p 13. Austin TX: PRO-ED.

Approaches to Covering Transition-Related Content

- **course development**

- **integration into existing content (*infusion*)**
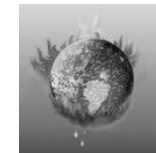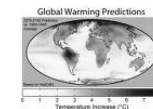
Source: Patton, Cronin, & Wood (2007)

"Spontaneous v. Planned"

▪ <u>**Spontaneous**</u> -- it just happens!

▪ <u>**Planned**</u> -- you can see it coming!

Your health: Developing strong bodies

Global Warming

Every Day, In Every Class, use the **"So What?"** Questions

- So <u>who</u> else might use this _____?
- So <u>what</u> kinds of job, activities, etc. might
-     use this _____?
- So <u>when</u> might you use this _____?
- So <u>where</u> might you use this _____?
- So <u>how</u> could you use this _____ in a
-     job, with your friends, etc.?
- So <u>why</u> is this important?

Student Focus

Providing opportunities to practice self-determination	Practicing executive functioning skills

---

The Self-Advocacy Strategy · Cue Card #2

THE STEPS OF THE SELF-ADVOCACY STRATEGY

Step 1: **I**nventory your
- strengths
- areas to improve or learn
- goals
- choices for learning or accommodations

Step 2: **P**rovide your inventory information

Step 3: **L**isten and respond

Step 4: **A**sk questions

Step 5: **N**ame your goals

© 1994 Van Reusen, Bos, Schumaker, Deshler

Students need opportunities to practice self-determination in classrooms

- Students lead their own IEP meetings
- Students choose their own assignments from a menu of items
- Students contract for their grades
- Students use peer editing and grading
- Students demonstrate mastery of the content through authentic evaluations (see UDL)
- Students are involved in extra-curricular activities to the same degree as their typical peers
- Teachers plan for these opportunities!

What is executive functioning?

- A set of mental processes that helps us to connect past experiences with present actions (ncld.org)
- Make plans
- Keep track of time
- Organize oneself
- Know when to ask for help, ask questions
- Multi-task
- Study efficiently
- Engage in group work

Many students with disabilities lack executive functioning skills!

The FRAME

Key Topic: Sinking of the Titanic

...is about... an event that taught lessons about...

Main idea: Lack of planning	Main idea: Class system	Main idea: Competition
Essential details	Essential details	Essential details
1-steel hull–too thin & _____	Rich _____ -upper deck (luxury)	Largest ship = more _____
Not enough _____	Middle _____ -middle decks	Fastest speed to break record crossing; unable to _____
Inattentive about _____	Lower class _____	More luxury = less _____
Lack of procedures for _____	_____	Broadest decks = fewer _____

So What? (What's important to understand about this?)

A great _____ can cause society to examine its values and practices so improvements can be made.

Transition-focused Secondary Education:

- Utilizes the tenets of Universal Design for Learning
- Relies on co-teaching opportunities
- Uses contextual and integrated learning opportunities
- Applies standards to transition-focused content
- Providing opportunities to practice self-determination
- Practicing executive functioning skills

  "What is Special about Special Education?"
    (Answer: Next Slide……)

YOU are the arbiter* of a transition focus in general education

Arbiter: One who has the power to judge or ordain at will

To Conclude:

- Transition educational opportunities are in the mind of the beholder
- It is how you *frame* your instruction that provides the crucial link to transition
- It is how you tie your instruction to adult tasks that provides the crucial link to transition
- It is how you allow students to have a voice in their own educational planning

"If a window of opportunity appears, don't pull down the shade."

Tom Peters

Resources

- Universal Design for Learning: www.cast.org
- Friend, M. & Cook, L. (2007). *Interactions* (5th Ed.). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Kochhar-Bryant, C. & Bassett, D.S. (Eds.) (2002). *Aligning transition and standards-based education: Issues and strategies*. Arlington, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.
- Thoma, C., Bartholomew, C., & Scott (2009). *Universal design for learning: A roadmap for planning and instruction*. Baltimore: Brookes Publishing.
- Zarrow Center for Learning Enrichment: http://education.ou.edu/zarrow/
- Center for Research in Learning, University of Kansas: http://www.ku-crl.org/about/